

BEFORE THE
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

COMPETITIVE PRODUCT PRICES
GLOBAL EXPEDITED PACKAGE SERVICES 7
(MC2016-196 AND CP2016-280)
NEGOTIATED SERVICE AGREEMENTS

Docket No.
CP2020-72

**NOTICE OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE OF FILING ERRATA TO
NOTICE OF UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE OF FILING A FUNCTIONALLY
EQUIVALENT GLOBAL EXPEDITED PACKAGE SERVICES 7 NEGOTIATED
SERVICE AGREEMENT AND APPLICATION FOR
NON-PUBLIC TREATMENT OF MATERIALS FILED UNDER SEAL
(December 27, 2019)**

The United States Postal Service hereby gives notice of filing an errata concerning its Notice of Filing a Functionally Equivalent Global Expedited Package Services 7 Negotiated Service Agreement and Application for Nonpublic Treatment of Materials Filed Under Seal filed in this docket on December 13, 2019 (Notice).¹ The Application for Nonpublic Treatment that was intended to be included as Attachment 4 to the Notice was inadvertently omitted from the initial filing and is attached to the instant filing.

¹ Notice of United States Postal Service of Filing a Functionally Equivalent Global Expedited Package Services 7 Negotiated Service Agreement and Application for Non-Public Treatment of Materials Filed Under Seal, Docket No. CP2020-72, December 13, 2019 (Notice).

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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APPLICATION OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR NON-PUBLIC TREATMENT OF MATERIALS

In accordance with 39 C.F.R. § 3007, the United States Postal Service (Postal Service) hereby applies for non-public treatment of certain materials filed with the Commission in this docket. The materials pertain to an additional Global Expedited Package Services (GEPS) 7 contract that the Postal Service believes is functionally equivalent to the GEPS 7 agreement filed in Docket No. CP2016-280. The contract that is the subject of this docket, the certified statement required by 39 C.F.R. § 3015.5(c)(2) for the contract, Governors' Decision No. 19-1, and related financial information are being filed separately under seal with the Commission. A redacted copy of the contract, the certified statement, Governors' Decision No. 19-1, and related financial information are filed with the Notice as Attachments 1, 2, and 3, and in separate Excel files.¹

The Postal Service hereby furnishes the justification required for this application by 39 C.F.R. § 3007.201(b) below.

(1) The rationale for claiming that the materials are non-public, including the specific statutory provision(s) supporting the claim, and an explanation justifying application of the provision(s) to the materials.

Information of a commercial nature, which under good business practice would not be publicly disclosed, as well as third party business information, is not required to be disclosed to the public. 39 U.S.C. § 410(c)(2); 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(3) and (4). The Commission may determine the appropriate level of confidentiality to be afforded to such information after weighing the nature and extent of the likely commercial injury to

¹ The Postal Service informed the customer for the contract prior to filing a notice that the Postal Service would be seeking non-public treatment of the redacted portions of the contract. The Postal Service also informed the customer for the contract that it could file its own application for non-public treatment of these materials in accordance with 39 C.F.R. § 3007.204.

the Postal Service against the public interest in maintaining the financial transparency of a government establishment competing in commercial markets. 39 U.S.C. § 504(g)(3)(A).² Because the portions of materials filed non-publicly in this docket fall within the scope of information not required to be publicly disclosed, the Postal Service asks the Commission to support the Postal Service's determination that these materials are exempt from public disclosure and grant the Postal Service's application for their non-public treatment.

(2) A statement of whether the submitter, any person other than the submitter, or both have a proprietary interest in the information contained within the non-public materials, and the identification(s) specified in paragraphs (b)(2)(i) through (iii) of this section (whichever is applicable). For purposes of this paragraph, identification means the name, phone number, and email address of an individual.³

In the case of a GEPS 7 contract, the Postal Service believes that the parties with a proprietary interest in the materials would be the counterparty to the contract, the PC Postage Provider(s) (if the contract allows for and the customer intends to use a PC Postage Provider), and foreign postal operators.

² The Commission has indicated that "likely commercial injury" should be construed broadly to encompass other types of injury, such as harms to privacy, deliberative process, or law enforcement interests. PRC Order No. 194, Second Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to Establish a Procedure for According Appropriate Confidentiality, Docket No. RM2008-1, Mar. 20, 2009, at 11.

³ Section 3007.201(b)(2) further states the following:

(i) If the submitter has a proprietary interest in the information contained within the materials, identification of an individual designated by the submitter to accept actual notice of a motion related to the non-public materials or notice of the pendency of a subpoena or order requiring production of the materials.

(ii) If any person other than the submitter has a proprietary interest in the information contained within the materials, identification of each person who is known to have a proprietary interest in the information. If such an identification is sensitive or impracticable, an explanation shall be provided along with the identification of an individual designated by the submitter to provide notice to each affected person.

(iii) If both the submitter and any person other than the submitter have a proprietary interest in the information contained within the non-public materials, identification in accordance with both paragraphs (b)(2)(i) and (ii) of this section shall be provided. The submitter may designate the same individual to fulfill the requirements of paragraphs (b)(2)(i) and (ii) of this section.

The Postal Service maintains that customer identifying information should be withheld from public disclosure. Therefore, in compliance with 39 C.F.R. § 3007.200(b), rather than identifying the customer for the contract that is the subject of this docket, the Postal Service gives notice that it has already informed the customer, and the PC Postage Provider (if applicable), that have a proprietary interest in the materials for the contract that is the subject of this docket of the nature and scope of this filing and their ability to address their confidentiality concerns directly with the Commission.⁴

The Postal Service employee responsible for providing notice to the customer with proprietary interest in the materials filed in this docket is Ms. Amy E. Douvlos, Marketing Specialist, Global Business, United States Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Room 5427, Washington, DC 20260-4017, whose email address is Amy.E.Douvlos@usps.gov, and whose telephone number is 202-268-3777.

As for foreign postal operators, the Postal Service recently provided notice to all foreign postal operators within the Universal Postal Union network through an International Bureau Circular issued on November 19, 2018, that the Postal Service will be regularly submitting certain business information to the Commission. Some UPU-designated foreign postal operators may have a proprietary interest in such information. The circular includes information on how third parties may address any confidentiality concerns with the Commission. In addition, contact information for all UPU Designated

⁴ The Postal Service has provided a blanket notice to PC Postage Providers in light of the fact that these filings are fairly routine. To the extent required, the Postal Service seeks a waiver from having to provide each PC Postage Provider notice of this docket.

Operators is available at the following link, which is incorporated by reference into the instant application: http://pls.upu.int/pls/ap/addr_public.display_addr?p_language=AN.⁵

(3) A description of the information contained within the materials claimed to be non-public in a manner that, without revealing the information at issue, would allow the Commission to thoroughly evaluate the basis for the claim that the information contained within the materials are non-public.

In connection with its Notice filed in this docket, the Postal Service included the GEPS 7 contract that is the subject of this docket, the certified statement concerning the GEPS 7 contract that is the subject of this docket, Governors' Decision No. 19-1, and related financial information. These materials were filed under seal, with redacted copies filed publicly. The Postal Service maintains that the redacted portions of these materials should remain confidential.

Redactions appear throughout the GEPS contract that is the subject of this docket, in the certified statement, on pages one and two of Governors' Decision No. 19-1, and on pages one and two of Attachment A of that Decision. These redactions protect sensitive commercial information concerning rates in the decision and their formulation, and the applicable cost-coverage, and the specific rates in the GEPS 7 contract that is the subject of this docket.

With regard to the GEPS agreement filed in this docket, some customer-identifying information appears in the redacted sections of the agreement on page 1, in the article concerning notices, in the signature block, and in the footer of the agreement and its annexes. This information constitutes the name or address of a postal patron whose identifying information may be withheld from mandatory public disclosure by

⁵ To the extent required, the Postal Service seeks a waiver from having to provide each foreign postal operator notice of this docket. It is impractical to communicate with dozens of operators in multiple languages about this matter. Moreover, the volume of contracts would overwhelm both the Postal Service and the applicable foreign postal operators with boilerplate notices.

virtue of 39 U.S.C. § 504(g)(1) and 39 U.S.C. § 410(c)(2). Therefore, such information is redacted.

The additional redactions to the agreement protect information with specific impact on the customer, including the minimum commitment to the Postal Service and the timing and manner in which the Postal Service might change prices under the contract. In addition, certain terms and the prices in Annexes 1 and 2 of the agreement are redacted.

The redactions applied to the Governors' Decision and financial workpapers protect commercially sensitive information such as underlying costs and assumptions, pricing formulas, information relevant to the customer's mailing profile, business information of interested third parties, and cost coverage projections. To the extent practicable, the Postal Service has limited its redactions in the workpapers to the actual information it has determined to be exempt from disclosure under 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). However, in a limited number of cases, narrative passages, such as words or numbers in text, were replaced with general terms describing the redacted material.

To the extent that the Postal Service files data in future filings that will show the actual revenue and cost coverage of the customer's completed contract, the Postal Service will redact in its public filing all of the values included that are commercially sensitive information and will also protect any customer identifying information from disclosure.

(4) Particular identification of the nature and extent of the harm alleged and the likelihood of each alleged harm alleged to result from disclosure.

If the portions of the contract that the Postal Service determined to be protected from disclosure due to their commercially sensitive nature were to be disclosed publicly,

the Postal Service considers that it is quite likely that it would suffer commercial harm. First, revealing customer identifying information would enable competitors to focus marketing efforts on current postal customers that have been cultivated through the efforts and resources of the Postal Service. The Postal Service considers that it is highly probable that if this information were made public, its competitors would take immediate advantage of it. The GEPS 7 competitive contracts include a provision allowing the mailer to terminate its contract without cause by providing at least 30 days' notice. Therefore, there is a substantial likelihood of the Postal Service losing customers to a competitor that targets customers of the Postal Service with lower pricing.

Other redacted information in the contract includes negotiated contract terms, such as the minimum revenue commitment agreed to by the customer, sensitive business information including payment processes and mail preparation requirements, and the percentage of cost increase that may trigger a consequential price increase. This information is commercially sensitive, and the Postal Service does not believe that it would be disclosed under good business practices. Competitors could use the information to assess offers made by the Postal Service to its customers for any possible comparative vulnerabilities and to focus sales and marketing efforts on those areas, to the detriment of the Postal Service. Additionally, other potential customers could use the information to their advantage in negotiating the terms of their own agreements with the Postal Service. The Postal Service considers these to be highly probable outcomes that would result from public disclosure of the redacted material.

The Governors' Decision and financial workpapers filed with this notice include specific information such as costs, assumptions used in pricing formulas, the formulas themselves, mailer profile information, projections of variables, contingency rates included to account for market fluctuations and the exchange risks. Similar information may be included in the cost, volume and revenue data associated with the GEPS 7 agreement that the Commission may require the Postal Service to file after the expiration of this agreement. All of this information is highly confidential in the business world. If this information were made public, the Postal Service's competitors would have the advantage of being able to determine the absolute floor for Postal Service pricing. Unlike its competitors, the Postal Service is required by the Mail Classification Schedule to demonstrate that each negotiated agreement within this group covers its attributable costs. Furthermore, the Postal Service's Governors have required that each contract be submitted to the Commission with a notice that complies with 39 C.F.R. § 3015.5. Competitors could take advantage of the information to offer lower pricing to GEPS 7 competitive contract customers, while subsidizing any losses with profits from other customers. Eventually, this could freeze the Postal Service out of the relevant market. Given that these spreadsheets are filed in their native format, the Postal Service's assessment is that the likelihood that the information would be used in this way is great.

Potential customers could also deduce from the rates provided in the contract, from the information in the workpapers, or from the cost, volume and revenue data that the Commission may require the Postal Service to file after the agreement's expiration, whether additional margin for net profit exists between the contract and the contribution

that GEPS 7 competitive contracts must make. From this information, each customer could attempt to negotiate ever-increasing incentives, such that the Postal Service's ability to negotiate competitive yet financially sound rates would be compromised. Even customers involved in GEPS 7 competitive contracts could use the information in the workpapers, or the cost, volume and revenue data associated with the expired agreement, in an attempt to renegotiate their own rates, threatening to terminate their current agreements, although the Postal Service considers this to be less likely than the risks previously identified.

Price information in the contract, the financial spreadsheets, and any cost, volume and revenue data concerning the contract filed after the agreement's expiration consists of sensitive commercial information of the customer. Disclosure of such information could be used by competitors of the customer to assess the customer's underlying costs, and thereby develop a benchmark for the development of a competitive alternative.

Information in the financial spreadsheets and any cost, volume and revenue data concerning this agreement filed after the expiration of this contract also consists of sensitive commercial information related to agreements between the Postal Service and interested third parties. Such information would be extremely valuable to competitors of both the Postal Service and third parties. Using detailed information about such agreements, competitors would be able to better understand the counterparty's underlying costs, and identify areas where they could adapt their own operations to be more competitive. In addition, competitors of the counterparty could use such information to their advantage in negotiating the terms of their own agreements with the

Postal Service. And competitors of foreign postal operators could use the information in the financial spreadsheets to understand their nonpublished pricing to better compete against them.

Information in the financial models may also include sensitive commercial information related to agreements between the Postal Service and PC Postage Providers. Such information would be extremely valuable to competitors of both the Postal Service and the PC Postage Providers. Using detailed information about such an agreement, competitors would be able to better understand the costs of the postage programs used, and identify areas where they could adapt their own operations to be more competitive. In addition, competitors of the PC Postage Providers could use such information to their advantage in negotiating the terms of their own agreements with the Postal Service.

(5) At least one specific hypothetical, illustrative example of each alleged harm.

Identified harm: Revealing customer identifying information would enable competitors to target the counterparty or its customer for sales and marketing purposes.

Hypothetical: The identity of the customer that signed a GEPS 7 contract is revealed to the public. Another delivery service has an employee monitoring the filing of GEPS 7 competitive contracts and passing along the information to its sales function. The competitor's sales representatives could quickly contact the Postal Service's customer and offer the customer lower rates or other incentives to terminate its contract with the Postal Service in favor of using the competitor's services.

Identified harm: Public disclosure of the pricing included in the agreement would provide potential customers extraordinary negotiating power to extract lower rates.

Hypothetical: Customer A's negotiated rates are disclosed publicly on the Postal Regulatory Commission's website. Customer B sees the rates and determines that there may be some additional profit margin between the rates provided to Customer A and the statutory cost coverage that the Postal Service must produce in order for the agreement to be added to the competitive products list. Customer B, which was offered rates identical to those published in Customer A's agreement, then uses the publicly available rate information to insist that Customer B must receive lower rates than those the Postal Service has offered it, or Customer B will not use the Postal Service for its expedited package service delivery needs.

Alternatively, Customer B attempts to extract lower rates only for those destinations for which Customer B believes that the Postal Service is the low-cost provider among all service providers. The Postal Service may agree to this demand in order to keep the customer's business overall, which the Postal Service believes will still satisfy total cost coverage for the agreement. Then, the customer uses other providers for destinations that are different than those for which the customer extracted lower rates. This impacts the Postal Service's overall projected cost coverage for the agreement, such that the Postal Service no longer meets its cost coverage requirement. Although the Postal Service could terminate the contract when the Postal Service first recognizes that the customer's practice and projected profile are at variance, the costs associated with establishing the contract, including filing it with the Postal Regulatory

Commission, would be sunk costs that would have a negative impact on the GEPS 7 Contracts competitive product overall.

Identified harm: Public disclosure of information in the financial workpapers would be used by competitors and customers to the detriment of the Postal Service and foreign postal operators.

Hypothetical: A competing delivery service obtains a copy of the unredacted version of the financial workpapers from the Postal Regulatory Commission's website. The competing delivery service analyzes the workpapers to determine what the Postal Service would have to charge its customers in order to meet the Postal Service's minimum statutory obligations for cost coverage and contribution to institutional costs. The competing delivery service then sets its own rates for products similar to what the Postal Service offers its GEPS 7 competitive contract customers under that threshold and markets its ability to guarantee to beat the Postal Service on price. By sustaining this below-market strategy for a relatively short period of time, the competitor, or all of the Postal Service's competitors acting in a likewise fashion, would freeze the Postal Service and associated foreign postal operators out of the markets for which the GEPS 7 competitive contract product is designed.

Identified harm: Public disclosure of information in the contract and the financial workpapers would be used by the counterparty's and its customer's competitors to its detriment.

Hypothetical: A firm competing with the customer obtains a copy of the unredacted version of the contract and financial workpapers from the Postal Regulatory Commission's website. The competitor analyzes the prices and the workpapers to assess the customer's underlying costs, volumes, and volume distribution for the corresponding delivery products. The competitor uses that information to (i) conduct market intelligence on the customer's business practices and (ii) develop lower-cost alternatives using the customer's costs as a baseline.

Identified harm: Public disclosure of information in the contract and financial workpapers would be used by the competitors of the third party to the detriment of the Postal Service and/or the counterparty to the agreement.

Hypothetical: A firm competing with the interested third party obtains a copy of the unredacted version of the contract and financial workpapers from the Commission's website. The firm uses the information to assess the third party's revenue sources and growth opportunities, and thereby develop benchmarks for competitive alternatives. In addition, disclosure of such information could provide leverage to other parties in their negotiations with the Postal Service concerning financial arrangements that they may make with the Postal Service in the future.

Identified harm: Public disclosure of any cost, volume and revenue data concerning this agreement that the Commission may require the Postal Service to file after the contract's expiration would give competitors a marketing advantage.

Hypothetical: A competitor could use any cost, volume and revenue data associated with this agreement, which the Commission may require the Postal Service to file in this docket after this agreement's expiration, to "qualify" potential customers. The competitor might focus its marketing efforts only on customers that have a certain mailing profile, and use information filed after the contract's expiration to determine whether a customer met that profile.

Identified harm: Public disclosure of information in a GEPS 7 contract involving postage payment through a PC Postage Provider, and of information in related financial workpapers, would be used by the competitors of the PC Postage Provider to the Postal Service and/or the PC Postage Provider's detriment.

Hypothetical: A firm competing with the customer's PC Postage Provider obtains a copy of the unredacted version of a GEPS 7 contract involving postage payment through a PC Postage Provider, and financial workpapers, from the Commission's website. The firm uses the information to assess the PC Postage Provider's revenue sources and growth opportunities, and thereby develop benchmarks for competitive alternatives. In addition, disclosure of such information could provide leverage to other PC Postage Providers in their negotiations with the Postal Service concerning financial arrangements that PC Postage Providers make with the Postal Service in the future.

(6) The extent of the protection from public disclosure alleged to be necessary.

The Postal Service maintains that the redacted portions of the materials filed non-publicly should be withheld from persons involved in competitive decision-making in

the relevant market for parcel and expedited services, as well as their consultants and attorneys. Additionally, the Postal Service believes that actual or potential customers of the Postal Service for this or similar products should not be provided access to the non-public materials.

(7) The length of time for which non-public treatment is alleged to be necessary with justification thereof.

The Commission's regulations provide that non-public materials shall lose non-public status ten years after the date of filing with the Commission, unless otherwise provided by the Commission. 39 C.F.R. § 3007.401(a). However, because the Postal Service's relationships with customers often continue beyond ten years or decades, the Postal Service intends to oppose requests for disclosure of these materials pursuant to 39 C.F.R. § 3007.401(b-c).

(8) Any other relevant factors or reasons to support the application.

None.

Conclusion

For the reasons discussed, the Postal Service asks that the Commission grant its application for non-public treatment of the identified materials.